**American Federation of Teachers, (2007). Building Parent-Teacher Relationships. Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Teachers.**

**Summary and Reflection:**

The basic premise of this article is that effective communication is essential for building school-family partnerships. This communication will constitute the foundation of all other forms of family involvement in the education of their children.

All parties benefit from this joint partnership in the educational experience. Parents will be better prepared to help their children be successful in school. They will gain ideas and tips on how to be a better parent and work together with the school and not as adversaries. The will also understand the value of the educational experiences of their child and the role that the school plays. Therefore, are more apt to support the school when issues do arise.

School communication with parents is usually around one of the following and it is help for administration to know which area you are communicating about.

* Classroom learning activities
* The child’s accomplishments
* How the parents can help at home with their child’s learning

This can help you as an administrator be very clear with your purpose and to communicate that purpose in a direct and positive manner with the parties involved.

Students can benefit also from parent involvement. Substantial evidence exists showing that parents who are involved with the children in school academics and extra-curricular activities perform better throughout their educational experience. This is why administrators must make an ongoing effort to make parental and community involvement a priority in their building. Parents should be welcome in the building and all educators should look for ways to partner with parents in the common goal of success for their children.

Teachers can benefit from family involvement by allowing parents to do some of the things that teachers have to do that distracts from instruction. When parents and families are involved teachers also, learn more about the students they serve and the unique needs that might impact their education. Also, according to the article, parents who are involved with the school tend to have a more positive view of teachers, which will result in better communication.

Some of the suggestions for opportunities of good two-way communication were parent conferences, parent-teacher organizations or school community councils, weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home with comments, phone calls and emails or school website. Some of the strategies to consider included parent newsletters, annual open houses, curriculum nights, home visits, phone calls, annual school calendars, media coverage, annual grandparents or “special persons” days, Board of Education spokesperson or communications, homework hotlines, annual field days, and workshops for parents. All of these strategies involve initiation, timelines, consistency and frequency, follow-through and clarity. All of this takes communication and a conscious effort to prioritize involvement.

As an administrator I think the article points out some of the struggles that you would encounter when in an administrator role. I think the urgency of the now seems to take over at times and you lose site of the “real work”. The administrators that I have watched navigate this issue with some success are those that are passionate about student learning and have projects that keep that work going.